ALASKA STATE MUSEUMS

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM, JUNEAU * SHELDON JACKSON MUSEUM, SITKA

Sheldon Jackson Museum

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JULY ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH ATHABASCAN MOCCASINS

The Sheldon Jackson Museum's Artifact of the Month for July is a pair of Athabascan moose and caribou hide ankle-wrap moccasins. An old paper tag retained in the background files reads: "Anvik, Yukon River, Presented by Sheldon Jackson, 1892."

The style of moccasin is atypical for Anvik. The traditional style of footwear consisted of footed trousers or footwear that reached the knee or thigh. For years, the Ingalik Athabascans of Anvik borrowed clothing styles from their neighbors, the Yup'ik Eskimos, giving their clothing a slightly different look than other Athabascans. By the 1880s, trade with Russians, Americans, and British had changed the old patterns of clothing as villagers obtained materials from the growing number of fur traders, government officials, missionaries and prospectors.

According to author Judy Thompson, (*Pride of the Indian Wardrobe, Northern Athabascan Footwear*) ankle-wrap moccasins may have been introduced to the Anvik region by the wife of an Episcopal minister in the late 1880s. The ankle-wrap style with embroidery and beading was probably taught at mission schools and sold as a popular item to newcomers to the north.

Jackson traveled throughout the Arctic during the summer of 1892 and mentions in his travel diaries that he spent most of his time on shore at St. Michael collecting for the "Sitka Museum" and the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. St. Michael, relatively accessible to the people of Anvik, could have been where Jackson acquired these ankle-wrap moccasins.

The moccasins will be exhibited July 1 through July 31. Summer hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Summer admission is \$4. Youth under 18 and those with annual passes are admitted free.

ATHABASCAN MOCCASINS



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